

REMARKS

Claims 33 and 34 are now pending in the application. Applicant amends claim 33. Support for the amendments can be found throughout the specification, claims and drawings as originally filed. Accordingly, no new matter is added. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 33 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Owa et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,348,971) in view of Morikawa et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 7,027,169). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Notwithstanding Applicant's traverse and solely in the interest of expediting prosecution, Applicant amends claim 33.

Amended claim 33 recites a distributed print management server that is connected to a plurality of printers through a network, divides print data into a plurality of print jobs and stores the print jobs *in a print queue*. The distributed print management server identifies one of the plurality of print jobs as one print job to be printed, broadcasts a print start notification to all printers, receives print job acquisition requests from idle ones of the plurality of printers, selects one printer from among the plurality of printers that have issued the print job acquisition requests, (the one printer being the most appropriate for the one print job based on printing capabilities and status information of the plurality of printers), and assigns the one print job to the one printer by sending print data of the one print job to the one printer and sending a print wait notification to other printers of the plurality of printers. After the print job is successfully

completed, the print job is removed from the print queue and notification of print job completion is made. Advantageously, the notification of print job completion is made *one by one* for each of the print jobs stored in the print queue. As such, if it is determined that the print queue is not empty, the distributed print management server repeats the identifying, broadcasting, receiving, selecting, and assigning steps for another one of the plurality of print jobs. On the other hand, if it is determined that the print queue is empty, the distributed print management server stops the above process (ends).

Thus, amended claim 33 now recites that the notification of print job completion is made one by one for each of the print jobs stored in the print queue. Claim 33 also recites that after the print queue is empty, the process ends. Support for this subject matter can be found at least at paragraphs [0142] – [0143] of Applicant's specification as originally filed. Accordingly, no new matter is added.

It is a longstanding rule that to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness of a claimed invention, all of the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 180 USPQ 143 (CCPA 1974), see MPEP §2143.03. Furthermore, when evaluating claims for obviousness under 35 U.S.C. §103, all of the limitations must be considered and given weight. *Ex parte Grasselli*, 231 USPQ 393 (Bd. App. 1983), MPEP § 2144.03. Here, the combination of Owa and Morikawa fails to disclose: removing a print job from a print queue after the print job is completed; making a notification of print job completion on a one-by-one basis relative to the jobs in the print queue; and ending the print server process after the print queue is empty.

Inasmuch as the prior art fails to teach or suggest all of the claim limitations, the prior art cannot render claim 33 unpatentable. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

It should also be noted that the Office Action alleges that "broadcasts. . ." is obvious because Owa teaches that when a document print command is entered, the user information selection means selects the appropriate printer for the specified print data in column 8, lines 30-38. Applicant respectfully disagrees. The limitation, "broadcasts a print start notification to all printer" in the present application and the teaching "selects the appropriate printer for the specified print data" in Owa are quite different. Owa merely teaches a conventional print method.

Furthermore, the Office Action alleges that "receives . . ." is obvious because Owa teaches that the output destination checks whether one or more printers satisfy the user print conditions in column 5, line 64 to column 6, line 1. Applicant again respectfully disagrees. The limitation "receives print job acquisition requests from idle ones of the plurality of printers" in the present application and the teaching "checks whether one or more printers satisfy the user print conditions" in Owa are quite different. Owa merely teaches a conventional print method.

Claim 34 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Owa et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,348,971) in view of Morikawa et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 7,027,169) and further in view of Fertlitsch et al. (U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2002/0089691). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Claim 34 depends from claim 33 and should be in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons as set forth above.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: March 12, 2009

By: /Bryant E. Wade/
G. Gregory Schivley
Reg. No. 27,382
Bryant E. Wade
Reg. No. 40,344

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

GGG/BEW/pvd